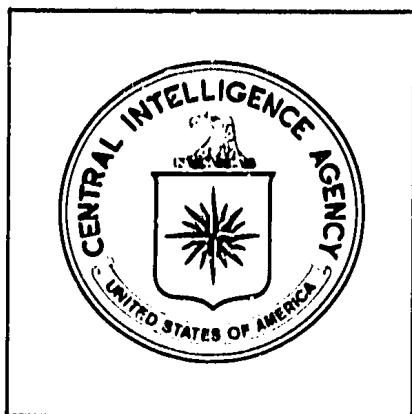


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# STAFF NOTES:

## Soviet Union Eastern Europe

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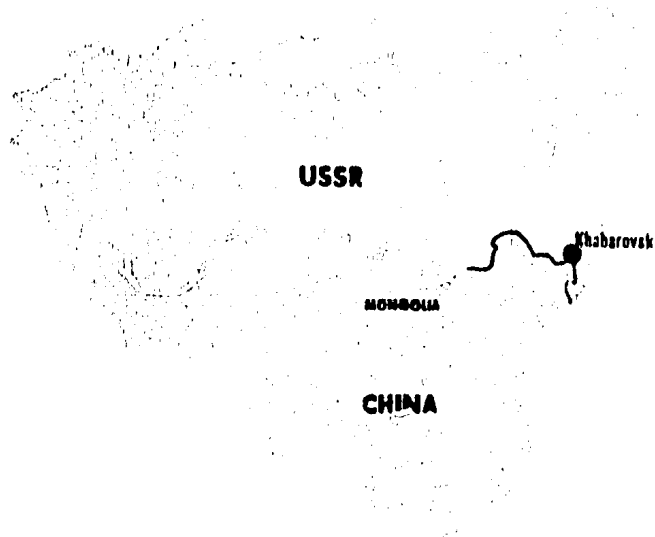
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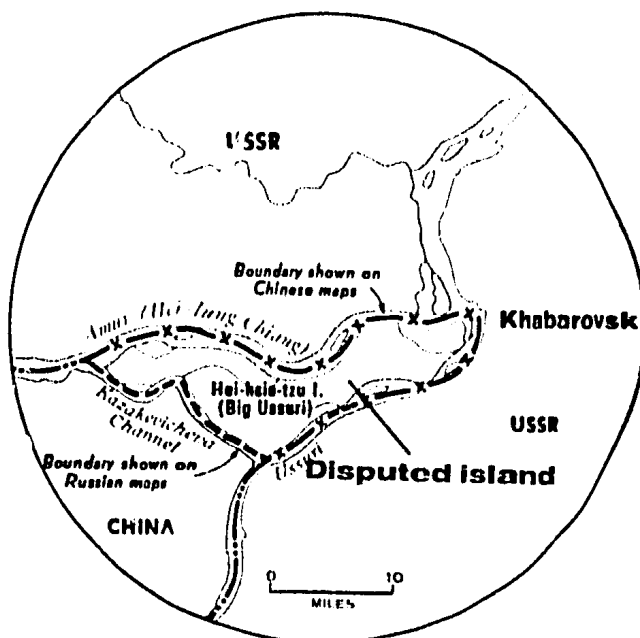
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### Sino-Soviet Border: A Disputed Area



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Soviet Negotiator at Sino-Soviet  
Border Talks Again Returns Home

The chief Soviet negotiator at the Sino-Soviet border talks, Leonid Ilichev, has returned home after three months of apparently fruitless discussions in Peking.

Soviet and Chinese officials have been uniformly negative on the latest round of the talks, which are now in their sixth year.

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A Soviet official asserts that the talks have foundered once again on Peking's demand that the USSR acknowledge that Chinese border claims are "disputed territories" and withdraw security forces from them before discussing demarcation of the frontier.

On the border itself, the Chinese have reiterated their right to sail past Hei-hsia-tzu Island (called Big Ussuri by Moscow) in parts of the Amur and Ussuri rivers claimed by the USSR.

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Peking for several years has ritualistically said it would take such action, but apparently has never done so. Last year, Moscow for the first time publicized its reply that Peking's proposed action must be approved by Soviet authorities. If China was to make such a request, it would be tantamount to recognizing Soviet sovereignty of the island.

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Kosygin To Visit Libya

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Soviet Premier Kosygin will make a five-day visit to Libya shortly after May 9, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] He reportedly will be accompanied by an entourage of 40, including Minister of Foreign Trade Patolichev. A Libyan-sponsored paper in Beirut has also reported that Kosygin is going to Tripoli.

Kosygin's visit will come about a year after Libyan Prime Minister Jallud visited Moscow to conclude a substantial arms deal with the Soviets.

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[REDACTED] During the past few months, however, the Soviets have been uneasy that declining Libyan oil income might hamper Tripoli's ability to pay for arms purchases. Patolichev may seek to work out some new barter arrangement swapping guns for oil.

Despite the arms shipments Moscow and Tripoli have not been able to get beyond a businesslike relationship because of mutual distrust and conflicting approaches to the Arab-Israeli question. Kosygin may inform the Libyans of progress of the Soviet effort to reconvene the Geneva conference and may hope to blunt Libyan attacks on Arab discussions with Israel.

Both the USSR and Libya probably expect the visit will have some impact on Egypt. The Soviets may hope to make Cairo uneasy about Soviet influence on its Western neighbor and to demonstrate to Egypt that the USSR has other options open to it in the Arab world. Tripoli--which has been persistently urging Moscow to dispatch a high-level visitor--will be especially pleased to see Kosygin now because of the recent further deterioration of its relations with Cairo.

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Moscow Steps Up Aid  
Shipments to Vietnam

Moscow is stepping up civilian aid shipments to Vietnam.

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Meanwhile, Tass announced yesterday that two Soviet merchant ships have arrived in Danang with rice and diesel fuel. This is the first direct Soviet shipment to South Vietnam--and the first of promised humanitarian assistance.

The rapidity of the Soviet response is a clear sign of Moscow's interest in strengthening its relationship with North Vietnam, particularly vis-a-vis China.

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Belgrade to Postpone Enactment  
of New Constitution

The government in Belgrade has recommended that the legislature postpone for a year the program adopted in February 1974, to "harmonize" all federal laws with the new constitution.

The regime originally committed itself to adjusting existing legislation by the end of 1975. The complexities of the new constitution have, however, overburdened the legislature--which is not renowned for efficiency anyway. The constitution, a visionary view of how Yugoslav socialism should develop over the long run, embodies untested organizational and political concepts. It also calls for basic changes in grass-roots political and economic organization, but it does not spell out the means of transition to the new system.

The additional time may well help the regime to avoid public conflicts over barely understood concepts and staggering organizational problems. Deputy Premier Vratusa pointed out in his request for more time that complex adjustments in federal regulation--the budgetary process, medium- and long-term planning, the tax system, and the relationships between different levels of state administration--require "broad, all-sided and thorough preparation."

Hard-headed politicians in Belgrade have long had doubts about the practicality of certain aspects of the new constitution. Edvard Kardelj, the moving force behind the constitutional reform, fell ill last fall and has only recently returned to active political life. He has his work cut out for him over the next year if he is to bring his visions into line with Yugoslav realities.

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The CPSU April Plenum:  
Further Considerations

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Several anomalies relating to the recent Central Committee plenum have yet to be explained. [ ]

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[ ] we examined some of the questions surrounding Shelepin's exit from the Politburo. Below we discuss some curious aspects of other business conducted at the plenum--its resolutions on foreign policy and the 25th Party Congress.

Foreign Policy

First, there is the fact that Foreign Minister Gromyko delivered the report on foreign policy. It is unusual for Brezhnev to share so much of the spotlight at a plenum, and especially when the subject is foreign affairs.

This follows some notable differences between the plenum in December 1973 and the one last December, when difficulties over trade relations with the US and relations with Egypt loomed. In December 1973, the plenum communique reported that Brezhnev delivered a long speech, and its resolution stated that the Central Committee approved "wholly and completely the activity of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee in carrying out the decisions of the 24th Party Congress in the fields of domestic and foreign policy and the theses and conclusions set forth" in Brezhnev's speech. Last December the Central Committee heard a major speech by Brezhnev, but limited itself to approving the plan and budget. The *Pravda* editorial on the plenum said Brezhnev summed up results and tasks in the economic sphere, but did not say that Brezhnev addressed the subject of foreign policy. In contrast, the *Pravda* editorial the year before noted that Brezhnev, in addition to speaking on the economy, also "reported on the Politburo's activity in the field of international politics." It

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appears from other evidence, however, that Brezhnev did in fact speak about foreign policy at the December 1974 plenum. Politburo candidate member Romanov, addressing a party aktiv in Leningrad on January 10, said that "Brezhnev's speech at the plenum described, in detail, the party's foreign political activity, revealed the main recent international events, and outlined the problems which are to be solved."

It is possible that Brezhnev discussed foreign policy at the plenum last December, but did not choose to ask for an official statement of approval on the subject. In any case, the last two plenums leave the impression that Brezhnev has adopted a somewhat lower profile in his approach to the Central Committee on foreign policy--despite the generous acclaim he has received in recent weeks for his conduct of foreign affairs from the Central Committee and other forums.

#### Party Congress

The second set of anomalies concerns the decision to set the date for the next Party Congress. The decision was taken earlier this time than for the last two congresses in 1966 and 1971. It was also handled differently in most other respects.

The plenum communiques in September 1965 and July 1970 reported that Brezhnev spoke on convening the congresses and that the sessions adopted a resolution on the question. This year the communique states simply that the plenum decided the question "in accordance with the report of Comrade L. I. Brezhnev." *Pravda* and *Izvestia* editorials on the plenum repeated the communique's formulation.

Brezhnev's statement on the Congress may have been so brief that it seemed inappropriate to describe him as actually delivering a report. The resolution states only that the Congress will be

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convened on February 24, 1976. In 1965 and 1970, the Central Committee resolutions setting dates for the congresses listed the Congress agenda and speakers--including Brezhnev delivering the summary report of the Central Committee and Kosygin the directives of the five year plan--as well as norms of representation and election procedures. The net effect of an unusually short report is to underline the extent to which another leader, Gromyko, seems to have starred at the plenum.

There is no ready explanation for why the decision on the Congress was so incomplete. The standard format on the last two occasions might lead to the conclusion that uncertainty over speakers was involved. Actually, however, there may be uncertainty about agenda items. In December 1972, Brezhnev promised that a new constitution would be ready to be discussed at the Party Congress, but there has been no sign of progress in drafting it. A fifteen year economic plan has also been promised in conjunction with the one for the next five years, but there may be some question about whether it will be completed in time or about how it should be presented to the Congress.

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[REDACTED]

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